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EL CAMINO REAL

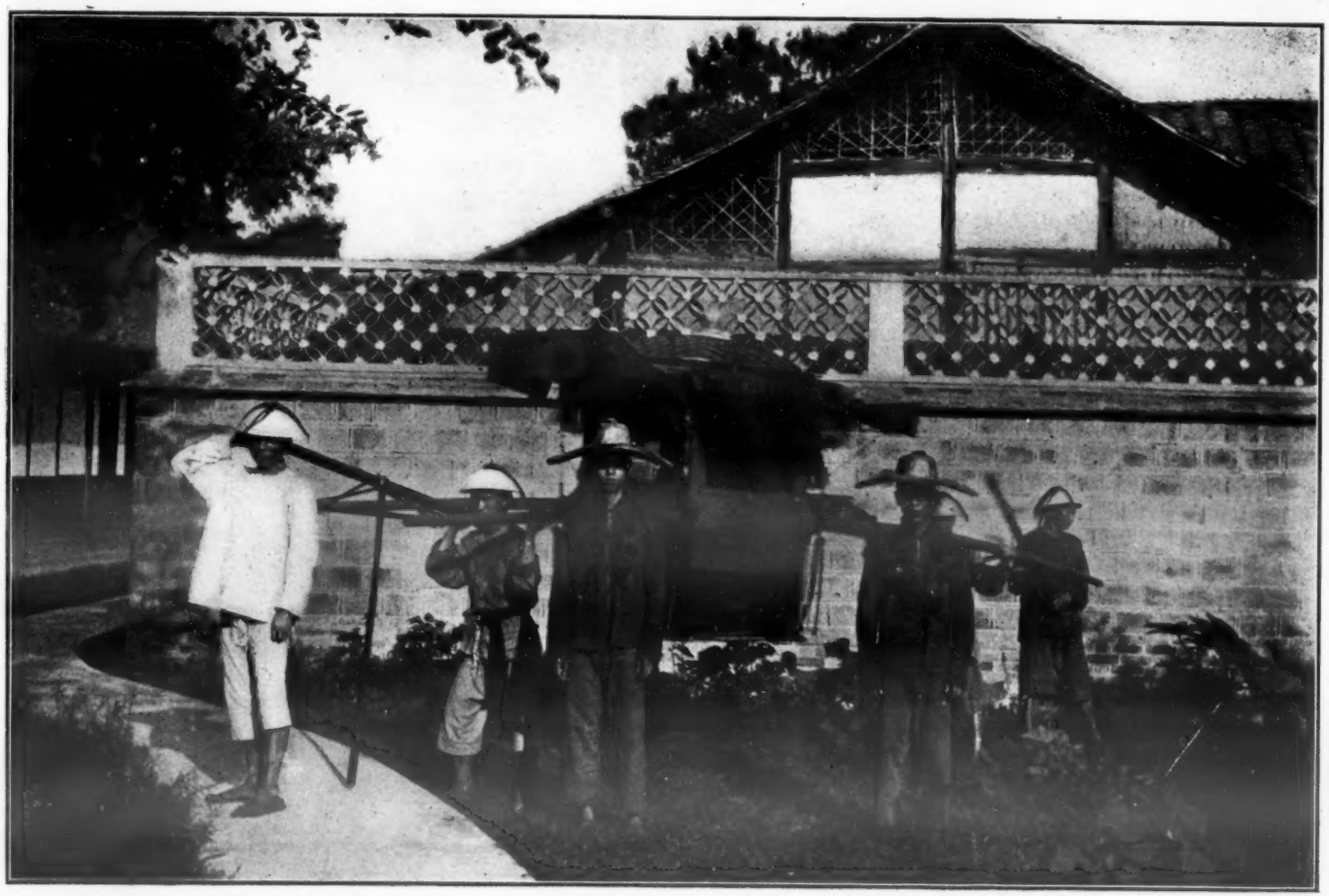
I close mine eyes and watch the pageant pass—
The mighty pageant! Hours long in the grass
Beside the ancient way, I, silent, stand.
It is the same, yet not the same dear land:
Great forests rustle in the lightsome breeze,
The Open Country calleth through the trees,
To seaward silver rivers swiftly run;
A thousand scented slopes shine in the sun,
Whereon the plenteous sheep and kine abound,
Some shepherd's song their single human sound.

Northward and southward toward the unknown vast
Journey the countless forms from out the Past:—
Franciscan priest, brown-robed, with earnest face.
Devout of purpose, sets his sandaled pace;
The Spanish soldier, clad in brave array,
Guideth his horse adorned with trappings gay;
The stalwart, dark skinned Indian neophite,
Alcalde, commandante, acolyte,
The Mexicano—revolutionist,
Vaquero, caballero, colonist:
The peoples of three races and three lands,
Zealots alike, the common roadway bands.

A strange, new tongue!—new faces now appear,
The proud pathfinder and the pioneer;
The rolling prairie schooner, rumbling coach,
Close crowd the well worn way with their approach.
Across yon snowy peak the puissant East
Hath found the West; the old regime hath ceased.

I ope mine eyes upon the lovely land,
Prosperity with Plenty hand in hand;
With rush and roar the great steel steeds speed by;
Towers of thronged cities I descry;
Yet hark! Upon my ear the subtle strain,
Slow-swelling, from the scattered chimes of Spain.

BESSIE PRYOR FLETCHER.



Chinese runners employed to carry away treasure to safe quarters after the household had been warned of approaching pirates.